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"Oral Examination of Applicants"

This material consists of:

- a. A staff study recommending the creation of two Examination Boards, - one for Senior Officers GS-12 and above and one for Junior and Intermediate Officers GS-7 through GS-11 - in place of the present Professional Selection Panel.

- b. Comments on the above by

the DD/P Career Service Board
the Assistant DD/I
the Director of Training
the Assistant Director for Communications
the Professional Selection Panel

The consensus seems to be that the two new Boards should not be created but that the existing machinery - the Professional Selection Panel - should be retained. A possible course of action by the Board might be to request the Professional Selection Panel to reconcile the various comments and make specific recommendations to the Board at its next meeting.

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3 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Administration)

FROM: Assistant Director (Personnel)

SUBJECT: Oral Examination of Applicants.

1. PROBLEM: To develop machinery through which oral examination procedures may be applied to determine and to advise the Assistant Director for Personnel on the suitability of applicants to fill junior, intermediate, and high level positions in the Central Intelligence Agency.

2. ASSUMPTIONS: (a) All of the means employed by CIA for the selection of personnel should be aimed at bringing into the Agency highly competent, loyal employees who are well motivated to join in performing the Agency's mission.

(b) Since a major objective of the career service program of CIA is to provide opportunities for growth and advancement to individual employees, it is important that incoming personnel have potentialities which measure up to the opportunities available.

(c) Criteria of suitability must be adapted to the career field within which a prospective employee's development and advancement will be made possible.

(d) Forming the best possible estimate of an applicant's suitability for career employment is subject to limitations no matter how well applicants from outside are screened, investigated, and tested. Provision for oral examination or interviewing of applicants, conducted by officials with experience in and knowledge of the Agency's intelligence operations and requirements, will increase the possibilities of employing only those persons who can be relied upon to be effective members of the Agency's work force.

3. FACTS: (a) The Career Service Committee adopted and included in its final report the recommendation of its working group on Trainees that a Professional Selection Panel be established under the direction of the Career Service Board to "review selection standards, including medical standards, for and the qualifications of all candidates up to and including the grade GS-11 for overt and semi-covert professional positions. The Panel will also, when requested by an Assistant Director

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25X1A arrange for the testing of a candidate in the GS-12 through GS-15 category, review his qualifications and make recommendations to the requesting Office." (Tab E, CIA [REDACTED])

(b) The schedule of employment processing operations proposed by the Career Service Committee provided for the Professional Selection Panel to hold interviews with candidates in the categories defined above subsequent to testing, personnel screening, medical clearance, and security approval, but in advance of the individual's entry on duty.

(c) In developing its operating plans, the Professional Selection Panel has omitted any proposal for conducting interviews with applicants. The Panel's position appears to have stemmed from the belief that the workload entailed in the adoption of the interviewing step would impose prohibitive demands upon the time of the members, and would entail an undue expenditure of funds to provide transportation for applicants to come to Washington for the interviews.

(d) Pursuant to instructions given it by the Career Service Board, the Panel is concentrating its activities upon (a) the formulation of criteria concerning over-all suitability to work in CIA on a career basis, and (b) the examination of individual cases of applicants or trial service employees where doubt is cast on suitability to work in CIA on a career basis as a result of administrative or marginal information developed by the Inspection and Security, Medical, and Personnel Offices and the Office of Training. Its recommendations with respect to each case are forwarded directly to the Assistant Director (Personnel).

(e) The operations of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service were cited by the Career Service Committee in its final report to the DCI as supplying an analogy to the proposed role of the Professional Selection Panel. Actually, oral examinations of Foreign Service applicants are conducted not by the Board members but by the Executive Director of the Board with the assistance of a group of Deputy Examiners chosen annually by the Board. These Deputy Examiners are chosen mainly for their skill in oral testing. (Tab A)

- 25X1A 4. DISCUSSION: (a) Best estimates which can be made with respect to the [REDACTED] entry on duty of personnel in grade categories from GS-7 through GS-15, predicated on an Agency ceiling [REDACTED] are as follows: 25X9A2

- (1) GS-7 through GS-11 (including GS-5's who are appointed to junior officer positions). . . . 60
- (2) GS-12 through GS-15 30

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25X1A An average allotment of one hour per interview would, therefore, comprise an interviewing load of at least 60 and 30 hours [redacted] for groups examining these two categories, respectively. It can be assumed that some applicants would not survive the interviewing step; accordingly, workload estimates would be expanded by this factor.

(b) The unwillingness of the Professional Selection Panel to assume the role of an oral examining body can be appreciated, taking into account the fact that the appointed members would have to perform this function. Sixty hours of interviewing time—in addition to their full time duties and responsibilities—would have represented a substantial burden for these members.

(c) The workload of interviewing candidates for positions in grades GS-7 through GS-11 would be considerably less burdensome if distributed among a larger group than the five voting members of the present Selection Panel, by designating Agency officials to serve as interviewers for relatively short periods of time.

(d) The Career Service Committee recommended that the jurisdiction of the panel include individual candidates for positions from GS-12 through GS-15 when requested by the Assistant Director concerned. However, the criteria applied in oral examinations of applicants for middle and senior level positions would be substantially different from those used for junior officer candidates. For the latter group, the interview should be used to furnish the basis for an appraisal of the individual's promise for career development within the area of opportunities afforded by the Agency. For the more senior personnel, the interview must yield an appraisal of the applicant's all-around capabilities and qualifications for intelligence functions. The establishment of separate examining bodies for each of these two categories of applicants would, perhaps accomplish improved interviewing results. Senior level applicants should be evaluated by high level Agency officials whose responsibilities have given them broad perspective of the Agency's requirements.

25X1A (e) The present Professional Selection Panel does not appear to rest on sound organizational principles. It is now an appendage of the Career Service Board, which itself has no command function or authority. Nonetheless, CIA [redacted] vests in the Panel authority to "finally approve on behalf of the Agency the selection of all professional personnel" up to GS-11. In effect, this statement of function disperses a command responsibility (i.e., appointment authority) to a committee-type Panel which does not exist within the Agency line of command. However, 25X1A under the provisions of CIA [redacted] the Panel's present responsibility is advisory instead of final with respect to the employment of individual applicants.

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(f) Problems encountered by the Foreign Service appear to be relevant for CIA. The Foreign Service's Board of Examiners was established by legislation to function under the general supervision of the Board of the Foreign Service. A report (Tab A) prepared by the Management Staff of the State Department points out that the present dispersion of personnel recruitment and examining responsibility between the Board of Examiners on the one hand, and the Personnel Office on the other has not been conducive to realizing a positive, cohesive personnel program.

5. CONCLUSIONS: (a) Improved personnel selection could be expected to result from installation of a program for interviewing applicants for non-clerical positions by representative groups of Agency officials.

(b) Because of differences in emphasis on selection criteria, separate bases of membership for the interviewing bodies should be established for applicants for junior and intermediate positions on the one hand, and senior positions on the other.

(c) The interviewing bodies should be so organized that the effectiveness of their operations will not be impeded by the demands made upon the time of officials serving as interviewers.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: (a) That there be established (1) a Senior Officer Examination Board with examining jurisdiction for grades GS-12 and above, and (2) a Junior and Intermediate Examination Board, for grades GS-7 through GS-11 (and lower grades when the candidate is to be a trainee for a professional position.) These Boards would have responsibility for considering the employment suitability of all applicants falling within the prescribed grade ranges. Since the operations of the Professional Selection Panel would be duplicated, the Panel should be discontinued.

(b) That the Senior Officer Examination Board be constituted as an advisory body to the Assistant Director for Personnel, to whom responsibility for exercising the appointment function has been delegated. Membership should be drawn from among chiefs of major organizational components (office head level) and other senior officials occupying positions of not less than grade GS-17. The Board should comprise at least three members. Members should be appointed to serve for six months' tours, with appointments staggered to provide for continuity. The membership of the Board should be as broadly representative of the Agency's major organizational elements as is possible. Whenever deemed necessary, the Board should be authorized to call upon assistance from personnel with specialized backgrounds. Meetings should be held at least once weekly. The Assistant Director (Personnel) would designate a Personnel Officer to serve as Board Secretary and to be available for technical personnel advice and assistance. The Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Directors could at their option participate in the proceedings as ex-officio members.

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(c) That the Junior and Intermediate Examination Board also be constituted on an advisory basis to the Personnel Office. This Board would comprise three members designated from such parts of the Agency as will assure a reasonable degree of Agency-wide representation. As with the Senior Board, members would be appointed for six months, with staggered tours. Membership should be limited to Agency officials in not less than grade GS-15. The Board should be convened on a weekly basis to dispose of all pending cases. A Personnel Officer would be named to provide Secretariat duties and to give such technical personnel advice as might be required. As in (b) above, the Board should be authorized to call upon expert assistance. Similarly, the Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Directors could participate in the work of the Board on an ex-officio capacity.

(d) That instructions issued to establish the Boards insure regular participation by the appointed members; although the workload will unavoidably add a sizeable burden upon Board members, the effectiveness of the oral examining program will depend heavily upon the quality of the Board's work.

(e) That where the Assistant Director (Personnel) feels a course of action should be taken which would be different from that recommended by either of the two boards proposed above, he would present the case to the Deputy Director (Administration) for final decision.

(f) Recognizing that the oral examination represents another step in the employment processing operation, applicants should be brought to Washington at Government expense for the purpose of appearing before the appropriate oral examining Board. Although the polygraphing of applicants prior to oral interviews with the Board would sometimes eliminate the necessity for further examination, it would also run the risk of upsetting some persons prior to their appearance before the Board. Polygraphing, however, should be handled before the individual returns to his home. Derogatory information elicited through the polygraph process might, of course, require reconsideration of the applicant by the Board. Transportation expenses to carry on this program would entail an estimated annual Agency expenditure of \$180,000.

/s/ W. H. H. Morris, Jr.
W. H. H. MORRIS, JR.
Assistant Director (Personnel)

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STAFF STUDY

Prepared by the Management Staff

Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration

MEMORANDUM FOR: A - MR. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service

This memorandum has been prepared in accordance with your request that A/IS examine the present functions and membership of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service. Particular attention has been given to the relationship of BEX to the planned expansion of the FSO category and implementation of other provisions of the directive to be issued pursuant to the Rowe Report.

Competition for Foreign Service appointments by written examination, administered by a body similar to BEX, has been looked upon for more than 50 years as a basic guarantee of a career service free from political influence. The Foreign Service Act of 1946 first established a statutory base for the BEX, providing that the Board of Examiners shall "in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary and under the general supervision of the Board of the Foreign Service, provide for and supervise the conduct of such examinations as may be given to candidates for appointment as Foreign Service officers in accordance with provisions of Sections 516 and 517, and to any other person to whom an examination for admission to the Service shall be given in accordance with this or any other Act." (Section 212).

The membership of the Board of Examiners is not specified in the Act except for the provision of Section 212(b) of the Foreign Service Act that "the membership of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service, not more than half of which shall consist of Foreign Service Officers, shall be constituted in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary". The present membership includes five representatives of the Department of State, four of whom serve ex officio, and representatives of the Department of Labor, Commerce, Agriculture, and the Civil Service Commission. A listing of the present membership and biographic sketches of other agency representatives is included as Tab A.

Sitting as a consultative body, BEX determines examination and selection policies for the Foreign Service Officer category. The Executive Director of BEX, with the assistance of a small staff, performs the actual operations required to carry out the examination program. The Educational

Testing Service grades the essay portions of the written examination on a contract basis. Oral examinations are conducted by the Executive Director with the assistance of a group of Deputy Examiners chosen annually by the Board of Examiners. Although an effort is made to secure adequate representation on the oral examining panels from the BEX member-agencies, Deputy Examiners are chosen primarily on a personal basis for their skill in oral testing.

The Board of Examiners has delegated to the Chief of FP by formal resolution responsibility for the administration of Foreign Service examinations except those required by Sections 516 and 517 of the Foreign Service Act.

An Advisory Committee on the Foreign Service examinations, consisting of public members with special competence in this field, assists the Board of Examiners in the preparation and review of the examination program. Membership of the Advisory Committee is attached as Tab B.

The problem presented by BEX and its staff is one of integration of their operations with the recruitment programs of the Department and the Foreign Service. BEX discharges its limited function, involving a high degree of public interest, with administrative propriety. It is not oriented, however, to give optimum service to the growing personnel needs of the Department. There are a number of steps which can be taken immediately within the present organizational framework to produce a better integrated recruitment program. Among these are:

- (1) Re-alignment of the Departmental representation in the BEX, which is now too heavily weighted with PER officers, to provide for greater participation by officers with experience in and familiarity with the functional and operating areas of the Department.
- (2) Establishment of provisions for adequate representation of Departmental interests on the oral Examining Panels.
- (3) Preparation of precepts for the Examining Panels each year, reflecting the personnel needs of the Foreign Service.

The long term solution of the problem of developing a sound and coordinated recruitment program, however, requires a basic regrouping of recruitment and examination functions within the Office of Personnel. The Rowe Report contains several recommendations concerning this aspect of personnel management, many of which are applicable under the modified provisions of the directive:

- (1) Development of a long term inventory of personnel needs as the basis for a positive recruitment program;

- (2) Modification and study of the FSO examination to provide for increased emphasis on the Social Sciences and specialized aspects of foreign affairs through (a) use of subject-matter options; (b) development of practical methods for determining qualities of emotional stability in candidates; and (c) consideration of the use of language aptitude testing in addition to achievement tests.
- (3) Increased emphasis on Departmental recruitment at the junior professional grades through such devices as an expanded Intern Program.
- (4) Strengthened selection and examination procedures for the FSS category.
- (5) Adequate provision for lateral entry into the Foreign Service through liberalization of Section 517 recruitment.

The present dispersion of recruitment and examination functions is not conducive to the development of a positive and coordinated program envisioned by the Report. There is now added reason to stress effective recruitment because of two circumstances not contemplated by the Committee. First, the Department is not accepting the recommendation of the Committee for an amalgamated Foreign Affairs Service. The basis for a fuller interchange between the Department and the field in future years, however, can be laid now by a careful program of recruitment and executive development, which will bring to the Department in increasing numbers young people adequately trained and oriented to dual-service careers. Secondly, the Department is facing a period of increasing manpower shortages, and is already encountering serious difficulty in recruiting adequate numbers of qualified personnel for its staffing requirements. It is consequently of great importance to provide the organizational basis for a vigorous and aggressive recruitment program.

There are a number of alternatives available to deal with this problem, each of which should be carefully explored before any definite action is recommended. At first glance, the course of action which appears to offer the greatest benefits would be consolidation of the recruitment and examination functions presently conducted by DP, FP, and BEX into a single Division of Examinations and Recruitment in PER. This change would be consistent with the recommendation of the Rowe Report that PER be reorganized on a functional basis, and would provide a single focus for the formulation and execution of an aggressive recruitment program consistent with the requirements of the Department and the Foreign Service.

Under such an arrangement, the Board of Examiners would be reconstituted in a purely advisory capacity, and probably should be restricted to State Department membership. Representation should include PER, and 3 or 4 members selected annually from the operating bureaus and functional offices of the Department. Policy decisions of significant concern to the Foreign Service should be cleared interdepartmentally through the Board of the Foreign Service.

The Advisory Committee on Foreign Service Examinations would continue at the discretion of the Chief of the Division of Examinations and Recruitment to provide advice in matters of policy or examination techniques for junior-grade recruitment to both the Departmental and Foreign Service.

Charles E. Johnson

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Security Information

23 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secretary
CIA Career Service Board

SUBJECT: Staff Study "Oral Examination of Applicants"
dated 3 February 1953

1. Reference staff study was considered by the DD/P Career Service Board.

2. This Board agreed that a system for the oral examination of applicants should be instituted in the Agency. It felt, however, that the recommendations made in reference staff study were not adequate to handle this problem at least as far as the DD/P elements are concerned. The Board was of the opinion that further detailed consideration be given to this problem with a view to placing the responsibility for oral examinations on the various Career Service Boards of the senior staffs of DD/P. This proposal would have the advantage of spreading the workload entailed in such examinations and placing the responsibility on individuals knowledgeable in the personnel requirements of the various activities. It is recognized that details would have to be worked out for a proper implementation of this idea, but it is felt that such a procedure would come closer to setting the requirements of the DD/P organization than having the work performed either by the Professional Selection Panel or the Boards of Examiners proposed in the reference staff study.

/s/

Chief of Operations, DDP

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cc: CAO

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24 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secretary, CIA Career Service Board

SUBJECT : Staff Study, "Oral Examination of Applicants,"
dated 3 February 1953

1. In my opinion, the recommendations set forth in subject staff study are unrealistic and unnecessary for the following reasons:

a. The present interviews conducted by Branch, Division and frequently by Office Chiefs constitute an adequate oral examination toward determining suitability for career employment.

b. The GS-17 and other Agency officials recommended as examiners are of more value to the Agency pursuing their primary responsibilities which, for the DD/I Offices, leave little or no time for additional administrative duties.

c. The estimated cost of \$180,000 per year for travel alone seems prohibitive.

d. The primary recruitment task should be viewed realistically as one of persuading top-flight persons to accept positions in the Agency rather than as one of setting up all possible exclusionary barriers.

2. The mechanism now extant in the Professional Selection Panel, is adequate to assist the Offices in selection of Career employees and should be encouraged to continue to increase its competence toward this end. I recommend that this Panel be kept separate from the "Command line," and be advisory to the Agency Career Board rather than to any single element of the Agency.

/s/

ROBERT AMORY, JR.
Assistant Deputy Director/Intelligence

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24 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Career Service Board

FROM: Director of Training

SUBJECT: Oral Examination of Applicants

REFERENCE: Memorandum 3 February 1953 from Assistant Director (Personnel) to Deputy Director (Administration), Same Subject

1. In commenting upon the above reference, it will be helpful to review existing "machinery" for oral examination of applicants and which may be exploited to advise the Assistant Director for Personnel on the suitability of applicants for positions in the Agency. Stated briefly, current practice in the handling of applicants provides oral examination or interview by a recruiting officer at the time of original contact, and thereafter by (a) a placement officer, (b) a personnel officer or assistant of the office believed most likely to employ the applicant, and (c) the chief of the organizational component of the office having apparent paramount interest in the applicant. Should an applicant be "passed over" at any point, he might then be referred to other branches, divisions, or offices until he is (a) selected, (b) rejected, or, (c) no longer available for interview. In some offices, final selection is made by the chief or deputy in which case an applicant tentatively selected at branch level would be interviewed successively at each level up to and including the official authorized to make final selection for the office.

2. All applicants who are selected by an office and whose appointment as employees is initiated are thereafter subjected to oral examination in the course of (a) medical examination and (b) security examination. Many applicants are further interviewed and examined orally in connection with psychological testing and assessment.

3. It may be seen, then, that few applicants are interviewed less than six times in the course of becoming employees of the Agency and some are interviewed and "orally examined" many more times during the process.

4. Establishment of the several proposed Examination Boards would not eliminate nor significantly alter or amend the existing machinery for oral examination outlined above. It is believed that better utilization and exploitation of the numerous interviews can be achieved by (a) regularizing the entire process, (b) formalizing the scope and purpose of interviews at each level, (c) assuring that

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interviews are conducted only by persons competent to elicit and evaluate oral evidence of skills, abilities, motivation, character, demeanor, etc., and, (d) assuring the immediate preparation and central recordation of reports of oral examination.

5. The recitation of facts set forth in paragraph 3(d) of reference does not make clear that any office may refer cases of doubtful suitability for consideration by the Professional Selection Panel ([REDACTED] 25X1A 8 December 1952) but that the Inspection and Security, Medical, Personnel, and Training Offices must refer to the Panel any information suggesting unsuitability of an applicant for employment or of a trial-service employee for retention.

6. Reference memorandum fails to come to grips with the problem basic and precedent to establishment of an oral examining board, namely, that of (a) identifying suitability factors, and, (b) establishing valid criteria for measurement of those factors. It is difficult to imagine anything more certain to result in chaos than an oral examining board operating without well defined objectives and firm criteria unless it be two such boards.

7. It is stated that ".....criteria applied.....for middle and senior level positions would be substantially different from those used for junior officer candidates." (Paragraph 6(d)) Authority for the conclusion is not cited. As far as is known, no criteria for judging suitability have been finally formulated nor has the CIA/CSB approved or promulgated any such criteria. It is not readily apparent why different criteria would be proposed for different levels unless it is intended to have employees re-examined orally as prerequisite to moving from junior to middle to senior level.

8. The discussion of "command functions" and "authority" and "responsibility" (paragraph 4(e)) seems to avoid the fact that the provisions of the Career Service Program as approved by the Director of Central Intelligence and announced [REDACTED] 25X1A does establish a perfectly valid system for determination of suitability for "career" employment.

9. The discussion (paragraph 4(f)), citing a report of the Management Staff of the State Department, states that "problems encountered by the Foreign Service appear to be relevant to CIA." Whether the entire generalization is correct is not known, but if it is accepted as applicable to the limited subject of the reference memorandum, then certainly the report of the State Department Management Staff should stifle any enthusiasm for (a), (b), and (c) of the recommendations set forth in the reference memorandum. For if the cited report bears witness to anything, it is the horrors of two examining boards, two systems, two criteria for selecting members of a single service.

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10. The Professional Selection Panel established pursuant to Notice [REDACTED] is authorized to conduct oral examination of both applicants for appointment and trial service employees. It has not done so because the Panel judged (a) the cost to be prohibitive at this time, and, (b) that firm determination of suitability factors and criteria should precede mandatory oral examination. The CIA/CSB affirmed those judgements.

11. The reference memorandum does not demonstrate failure of the Professional Selection Panel to carry out the directives of the CIA/CSB nor that those directives are at variance with the Career Service Program as approved by DCI. Therefore, the reference memorandum does not establish need for the recommendations submitted to the Board.

12. It is recommended that the CIA/CSB disapproved the recommendations of the reference memorandum. It is further recommended that:

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(a) the Board reaffirm its directive to the Panel as set forth [REDACTED] and,

(b) the Board instruct the Panel to consider and evaluate all proposals regarding oral examination as a technique for determining suitability of applicants and to report to the Board at an early date its judgement as to whether, when, and how such technique should be utilized by CIA.

/s/ Matthew Baird

MATTHEW BAIRD

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24 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secretary, CIA
Career Service Board

FROM : Assistant Director for Communications

SUBJECT : Comments Concerning Staff Study "Oral Examination of
Applicants" dated 3 February 1953

1. The following comments concerning the above subject are forwarded as requested in your memorandum of 16 February 1953.

2. I concur in the principle established by the staff study and appreciate the care and attention with which the study was prepared. The validity of "oral" examination, whether informal or formal in nature, is unquestioned as one element in the selection process. I do question, however, the application and membership of the proposed Examination Boards.

3. In considering the parallel of the Foreign Service Board of Examiners and the proposed Examination Boards in CIA the following points are made:

(a) The purview of the Foreign Service Board is limited to Foreign Service Officer candidates. Thus, its purview is limited to a career corps of foreign duty personnel wherein duties are well organized and requirements well known. In CIA the Clandestine Services' intelligence officer corps, not yet career established as in State, is the only group which can be considered similar to the FSO list. The intelligence and intelligence support fields, by their very nature, are more encompassing and intensive than the Foreign Service. An Examining Board in the Clandestine Services' field alone might thus have a task considerably greater than the BEX of the Foreign Service. Too, it is noted that BEX operations have not been without valid criticism.

(b) As recognized in State, the Foreign Service personnel requirements and standards are often quite different from Departmental personnel criteria. It occurs to me that, at least for the present, selection criteria (including oral examination content and procedure) may vary considerably between candidates for the following components of CIA; DD/P, DD/I, DD/A, AD/COM and, to a lesser extent, OTR. Individual component Examining Boards would, I believe, effectively serve to meet the principle of oral examination and efficiently advise the Assistant Director for Personnel concerning personnel selection. A single board, with high level membership, is required within each component listed.

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4. I believe that a complete set of selection criteria, of which oral examination is but an element, should be established by the components enumerated in paragraph 3 (b) above. Such a detailed set of criteria will greatly aid any selection board and will do much to insure an equitable and effective Career Service. The absence of a true career delineation in CIA complicates the application of existing and proposed selection criteria.

5. I wonder if the application and satisfaction of the one-year probationary period plus acceptance of professional officer candidates on the basis of detailed selection criteria, including oral examination by Component Examining Boards, would not answer our problem for the immediate future?

/s/

[REDACTED]

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20 FEB 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Career Service Board

FROM : Chairman, Professional Selection Panel

SUBJECT : Oral Examination of Applicants

REFERENCE : Memorandum dated 3 February 1953 to the Deputy Director (Administration) from the Assistant Director (Personnel), same subject

1. The subject memorandum having been referred to the Professional Selection Panel for comment and presentation to the Board, the Panel has reviewed it and presents the following:

The Career Service Program, established in June, provided for a Professional Selection Panel and outlined certain procedures and responsibilities for it. The Panel early recognized that oral examination of all applicants would be impossible for the Panel as then constituted and pointed this out in seeking guidance from the Career Board. The Panel recommended at that time that oral examinations not be attempted until such time as experience had formed a foundation upon which they could be conducted in a manner which would justify the great expenditure of time and money.

The Panel has always recognized that oral examination is essential in the determination of suitability. Any system of oral examination will, as in the Foreign Service, necessitate the establishment of a Board of Examiners. The referenced paper is wholly unrealistic in recommending a Senior Panel, in that a Board of Assistant Directors would not or could not take the time to meet on as many cases as should be presented. As the problem then is the establishment of a Board of Examiners to conduct oral examinations, it is not necessary to scrap the present machinery but rather to give it the tools with which to work.

The Panel agrees with the principle that under no circumstances should any such Selection Board come within the command line but would extend the statement and say that such a board should never be subjected to pressures and should be required to make its determinations objectively and without regard to any special interest. The experience of the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service has borne out the validity of this position. The proceedings and the findings of the Board on any case are confidential to the Deputy Examiners sitting on the case and are closed. Should any examining panel be subject to command, it will of necessity lose objectivity and will be unable to perform the very function for which it was

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established. A rubber-stamp panel would in the end fail even to give an aura of respectability to selection determinations.

A premise with which the Panel does take objection is that criteria for selection must necessarily and will be different for high and low grade personnel. It is agreed that evidence of and methods for determining such evidence of suitability may be easier in the more mature, experienced, senior people but the fundamental qualities with which the Panel is attempting to deal are the same throughout the grade range. Likewise, and for the same reason, it is equally important that young people be selected by Agency officers of broad experience as that candidates for senior positions be so selected.

Finally, the Panel's position may be summarized by saying that however oral examinations are to be conducted, there already exists a mechanism which requires only the tools, i.e., funds and the authority to establish a Board of Examiners from among the experienced officers of the Agency.

The Panel recommends that, if such a system of oral examinations is started, the applicant should, while in Washington for the examination, also be assessed, medically examined and polygraphed, as well as interviewed by the Selection Panel. Alternatively, consideration might be given to the application of such procedures prior to the expiration of an employee's trial service period.

All of these are screening devices which logically could be applied at the same time and, as such, in the total package would be acceptable to the applicant.

SIGNED


Chairman

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Approved For Release 2001/08/01 : CIA-RDP80-01826R000600190052-3

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26 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
Deputy Director (Plans)
Assistant Director for Communications
Director of Training
Chairman, Professional Selection Panel ✓

FROM: Executive Secretary, CIA Career Service Board

SUBJECT: Staff Study "Oral Examination of Applicants", dated
3 February 1953

1. The attached Staff Study will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the CIA Career Service Board. The Chairman of the Board has asked that there be attached to it comments from the DD/I, the DD/P, the Assistant Director for Communications, the Director of Training and the Professional Selection Panel.

2. There is also attached a Memorandum of Conversation with the Executive Director of the Board of Foreign Examiners of the Foreign Service which may be useful.

3. In order that they may be distributed with the agenda of the next Board meeting, your comments should be in the hands of the undersigned not later than COB 24 February 1953.

FOR THE CIA CAREER SERVICE BOARD:

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Attachments

REV 27	REV DATE 2 JUL 1951	BY 029725
ORIG COMP	OPR 32	TYPE C
ORIG CLASS 5	PRG 13	REV CLASS
JST 22	NEXT REV 204	AUTH NR 12-2

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3 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Administration)
FROM: Assistant Director (Personnel)
SUBJECT: Oral Examination of Applicants.

1. PROBLEM: To develop machinery through which oral examination procedures may be applied to determine and to advise the Assistant Director for Personnel on the suitability of applicants to fill junior, intermediate, and high level positions in the Central Intelligence Agency.
2. ASSUMPTIONS: (a) All of the means employed by CIA for the selection of personnel should be aimed at bringing into the Agency highly competent, loyal employees who are well motivated to join in performing the Agency's mission.

(b) Since a major objective of the career service program of CIA is to provide opportunities for growth and advancement to individual employees, it is important that incoming personnel have potentialities which measure up to the opportunities available.

(c) Criteria of suitability must be adapted to the career field within which a prospective employee's development and advancement will be made possible.

(d) Forming the best possible estimate of an applicant's suitability for career employment is subject to limitations no matter how well applicants from outside are screened, investigated, and tested. Provision for oral examination or interviewing of applicants, conducted by officials with experience in and knowledge of the Agency's intelligence operations and requirements, will increase the possibilities of employing only those persons who can be relied upon to be effective members of the Agency's work force.

3. FACTS: (a) The Career Service Committee adopted and included in its final report the recommendation of its working group on Trainees that a Professional Selection Panel be established under the direction of the Career Service Board to "review selection standards, including medical standards, for and the qualifications of all candidates up to and including the grade GS-11 for overt and semi-covert professional positions. The Panel will also, when requested by an Assistant Director

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arrange for the testing of a candidate in the GS-12 through GS-15 category, review his qualifications and make recommendations to the requesting Office." (Tab E, CIA [REDACTED])

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(b) The schedule of employment processing operations proposed by the Career Service Committee provided for the Professional Selection Panel to hold interviews with candidates in the categories defined above subsequent to testing, personnel screening, medical clearance, and security approval, but in advance of the individual's entry on duty.

(c) In developing its operating plans, the Professional Selection Panel has omitted any proposal for conducting interviews with applicants. The Panel's position appears to have stemmed from the belief that the workload entailed in the adoption of the interviewing step would impose prohibitive demands upon the time of the members, and would entail an undue expenditure of funds to provide transportation for applicants to come to Washington for the interviews.

(d) Pursuant to instructions given it by the Career Service Board, the Panel is concentrating its activities upon (a) the formulation of criteria concerning over-all suitability to work in CIA on a career basis, and (b) the examination of individual cases of applicants or trial service employees where doubt is cast on suitability to work in CIA on a career basis as a result of administrative or marginal information developed by the Inspection and Security, Medical, and Personnel Offices and the Office of Training. Its recommendations with respect to each case are forwarded directly to the Assistant Director (Personnel).

(e) The operations of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service were cited by the Career Service Committee in its final report to the DCI as supplying an analogy to the proposed role of the Professional Selection Panel. Actually, oral examinations of Foreign Service applicants are conducted not by the Board members but by the Executive Director of the Board with the assistance of a group of Deputy Examiners chosen annually by the Board. These Deputy Examiners are chosen mainly for their skill in oral testing. (Tab A)

4. DISCUSSION: (a) Best estimates which can be made with respect to the [REDACTED] entry on duty of personnel in grade categories from GS-7 through GS-15, predicated on an Agency ceiling of [REDACTED] are as follows:

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- (1) GS-7 through GS-11 (including GS-5's who are appointed to junior officer positions). . . . 60
- (2) GS-12 through GS-15 30

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25X1A An average allotment of one hour per interview would, therefore, comprise an interviewing load of at least 60 and 30 hours [REDACTED] for groups examining these two categories, respectively. It can be assumed that some applicants would not survive the interviewing step; accordingly, workload estimates would be expanded by this factor.

(b) The unwillingness of the Professional Selection Panel to assume the role of an oral examining body can be appreciated, taking into account the fact that the appointed members would have to perform this function. Sixty hours of interviewing time--in addition to their full time duties and responsibilities--would have represented a substantial burden for these members.

(c) The workload of interviewing candidates for positions in grades GS-7 through GS-11 would be considerably less burdensome if distributed among a larger group than the five voting members of the present Selection Panel, by designating Agency officials to serve as interviewers for relatively short periods of time.

(d) The Career Service Committee recommended that the jurisdiction of the panel include individual candidates for positions from GS-12 through GS-15 when requested by the Assistant Director concerned. However, the criteria applied in oral examinations of applicants for middle and senior level positions would be substantially different from those used for junior officer candidates. For the latter group, the interview should be used to furnish the basis for an appraisal of the individual's promise for career development within the area of opportunities afforded by the Agency. For the more senior personnel, the interview must yield an appraisal of the applicant's all-around capabilities and qualifications for intelligence functions. The establishment of separate examining bodies for each of these two categories of applicants would, perhaps accomplish improved interviewing results. Senior level applicants should be evaluated by high level Agency officials whose responsibilities have given them broad perspective of the Agency's requirements.

25X1A (e) The present Professional Selection Panel does not appear to rest on sound organizational principles. It is now an appendage of the Career Service Board, which itself has no command function or authority. Nonetheless, CIA [REDACTED] vests in the Panel authority to "finally approve on behalf of the Agency the selection of all professional personnel" up to GS-11. In effect, this statement of function disperses a command responsibility (i.e., appointment authority) to a committee-type Panel which does not exist within the Agency line of command. However, 25X1A under the provisions of CIA [REDACTED] the Panel's present responsibility is advisory instead of final with respect to the employment of individual applicants.

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(f) Problems encountered by the Foreign Service appear to be relevant for CIA. The Foreign Service's Board of Examiners was established by legislation to function under the general supervision of the Board of the Foreign Service. A report (Tab A) prepared by the Management Staff of the State Department points out that the present dispersion of personnel recruitment and examining responsibility between the Board of Examiners on the one hand, and the Personnel Office on the other has not been conducive to realizing a positive, cohesive personnel program.

5. CONCLUSIONS: (a) Improved personnel selection could be expected to result from installation of a program for interviewing applicants for non-clerical positions by representative groups of Agency officials.

(b) Because of differences in emphasis on selection criteria, separate bases of membership for the interviewing bodies should be established for applicants for junior and intermediate positions on the one hand, and senior positions on the other.

(c) The interviewing bodies should be so organized that the effectiveness of their operations will not be impeded by the demands made upon the time of officials serving as interviewers.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: (a) That there be established (1) a Senior Officer Examination Board with examining jurisdiction for grades GS-12 and above, and (2) a Junior and Intermediate Examination Board, for grades GS-7 through GS-11 (and lower grades when the candidate is to be a trainee for a professional position.) These Boards would have responsibility for considering the employment suitability of all applicants falling within the prescribed grade ranges. Since the operations of the Professional Selection Panel would be duplicated, the Panel should be discontinued.

(b) That the Senior Officer Examination Board be constituted as an advisory body to the Assistant Director for Personnel, to whom responsibility for exercising the appointment function has been delegated. Membership should be drawn from among chiefs of major organizational components (office head level) and other senior officials occupying positions of not less than grade GS-17. The Board should comprise at least three members. Members should be appointed to serve for six months' tours, with appointments staggered to provide for continuity. The membership of the Board should be as broadly representative of the Agency's major organizational elements as is possible. Whenever deemed necessary, the Board should be authorized to call upon assistance from personnel with specialized backgrounds. Meetings should be held at least once weekly. The Assistant Director (Personnel) would designate a Personnel Officer to serve as Board Secretary and to be available for technical personnel advice and assistance. The Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Directors could at their option participate in the proceedings as ex-officio members.

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(c) That the Junior and Intermediate Examination Board also be constituted on an advisory basis to the Personnel Office. This Board would comprise three members designated from such parts of the Agency as will assure a reasonable degree of Agency-wide representation. As with the Senior Board, members would be appointed for six months, with staggered tours. Membership should be limited to Agency officials in not less than grade GS-15. The Board should be convened on a weekly basis to dispose of all pending cases. A Personnel Officer would be named to provide Secretariat duties and to give such technical personnel advice as might be required. As in (b) above, the Board should be authorized to call upon expert assistance. Similarly, the Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Directors could participate in the work of the Board on an ex-officio capacity.

(d) That instructions issued to establish the Boards insure regular participation by the appointed members; although the workload will unavoidably add a sizeable burden upon Board members, the effectiveness of the oral examining program will depend heavily upon the quality of the Board's work.

(e) That where the Assistant Director (Personnel) feels a course of action should be taken which would be different from that recommended by either of the two boards proposed above, he would present the case to the Deputy Director (Administration) for final decision.

(f) Recognizing that the oral examination represents another step in the employment processing operation, applicants should be brought to Washington at Government expense for the purpose of appearing before the appropriate oral examining Board. Although the polygraphing of applicants prior to oral interviews with the Board would sometimes eliminate the necessity for further examination, it would also run the risk of upsetting some persons prior to their appearance before the Board. Polygraphing, however, should be handled before the individual returns to his home. Derogatory information elicited through the polygraph process might, of course, require reconsideration of the applicant by the Board. Transportation expenses to carry on this program would entail an estimated annual Agency expenditure of \$180,000.

/s/ W. H. H. Morris, Jr.
W. H. H. MORRIS, JR.
Assistant Director (Personnel)

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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